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NOTES

THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The *Weekly Reports on Labor Conditions* obtained by the United States Employment Service from January 25 to February 22 may be summarized as follows:

Week Ending	Number of Cities	Number of Concerns	Number of Laborers	Number of Cities Reporting Surplus	Number of Cities Reporting Shortage	Percentage Showing Surplus	Number of Cities Reporting Unsettled Industrial Relations	Number of Cities Reporting Acute Industrial Relations
Jan. 25 .	122	6,895	3,461,494	61	18	50.0	14	8
Feb. 1 .	122	6,924	3,479,874	69	16	56.6	17	10
Feb. 8 .	122	6,924	3,420,261	72	17	59.0	14	17
Feb. 15 .	122	6,928	3,388,080	74	18	60.7	15	18
Feb. 22 .	122	6,928	3,396,940	82	18	67.2	17	16

The reports of estimated total surplus from January 4 to February 22 are as follows:

Jan. 4.....	120,589	Feb. 1.....	292,831
Jan. 11.....	175,951	Feb. 8.....	323,685
Jan. 18.....	211,700	Feb. 15.....	358,797
Jan. 25.....	258,332	Feb. 22.....	367,130

While the steady increase in unemployment as shown by these reports is significant, it is necessary to observe that they are far from revealing the entire story. In the first place, the returns do not pretend to cover the entire labor situation in any given city. For instance, from New York come reports for only 200 concerns employing 88,129 workers; Chicago reports cover 248 concerns, with 208,491 employees; and Boston reports 149 concerns, with 119,651 laborers.

In the second place, the actual number of workers reported on pay-rolls is decreasing more rapidly than the volume of reported unemployment is increasing, despite the increase in total volume of workers caused by the return of the troops. For instance, from February 1 to 8 the number employed decreased by 59,613; but during this week the estimated total surplus increased by only 30,857.

It is common knowledge that New York and Chicago have had a large volume of unemployment for weeks, although these reports indicated an equality in New York until February 8, and in Chicago to date. It has now been admitted, however, that the labor surplus in New York is about normal for this season of the year. Local agencies in Chicago indicate a surplus of from 25,000 to 75,000. It appears that many laborers, particularly the unskilled, are not making application to the employment agencies.

In the matter of distribution the cities showing a labor shortage are now almost exclusively in the South. The largest cases of reported surplus are as follows: Cleveland 75,000, Detroit 25,000, Buffalo 20,000.

New features in the reports are (1) the *Clearance Bulletin*, (2) digest of trade papers by industry groups, and (3) digest of labor reports by cities and industries with trade-paper reports. The *Clearance Bulletin* is a compilation from the records of the United States Employment Service, showing the applicants for jobs that cannot be placed within each state and the positions that cannot be filled within each state. It is for the use of state directors in arranging for the interstate clearance of applicants and opportunities.

The digest of trade reports should prove very useful. Of added interest to labor students is the digest of labor developments within the different industries. The trade digests indicate extreme dullness in nearly every important line of industry, with little hope for an early return to activity. In many basic lines the plants are operating at only from 50 to 75 per cent capacity. An interesting feature of the iron and steel trade is the fact that independents are operating at an average of under 60 per cent capacity, while the United States Steel Corporation is running at 90 per cent capacity and laying up heavy stocks at present high costs. The explanation is that the corporation will soon be fortified for closing certain plants entirely, which is more economical than operating all plants at part capacity. This development should prove of interest to those who still insist that the opening of spring will mark the return of a great shortage of labor.

At the present writing (March 3) the Boys' Working Reserve is still being promoted by the Department of Labor. It is urged that the public schools should prepare to release the boys early in order to relieve the great shortage of labor that is in prospect for the spring months. Is there a possibility of unemployment in the Department of Labor?